

# Leicester's Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy

Making Leicester a great place to work and deliver high  
quality social care services

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## Summary

### Our Vision

#### **Making Leicester a great place to work and deliver high quality social care services.**

- The social care workforce feels valued in their role.
- Care work is seen as a worthwhile and rewarding career, in which people can develop and progress, and potential workers understand the personal qualities necessary.
- Young people view the role as an attractive career.
- Terms and conditions are appropriate to recruit and retain quality staff.
- Care services are operating with not just safe and sustainable staffing levels, but with staff motivated to provide excellent quality and consistency of care for people.
- There is increased staff retention in the sector as people choose to stay and develop their careers in care.
- Providers feel supported by the local authority to recruit and develop a sustainable and highly skilled workforce.

### Our Strategic Priorities

#### **1. Valued**

- Enhance the professionalisation of staff.
- Bring in rewards and incentives.
- Set out clear career pathways and upskill staff.
- Ensure there is a fair pay offer.
- Develop a communications campaign that shows how we value carers.

#### **2. Sufficient**

- Support recruitment and retention.
- Learning from data from partners such as Skills for Care and use it to focus our efforts.
- Move towards an integrated workforce strategy.
- Explore how routes into social care can be improved and promoted to all age groups.
- Work in partnership with internal and external colleagues to synergise and add value.
- Engage with and consult the workforce and advocate for them as appropriate.

#### **3. Confident and Competent**

- Continue to offer and support training provision either directly or through partners such as the LSCDG, Inspired to Care and Skills for Care.
- Link with other related initiatives to identify opportunities.
- Support our workforce through practical solutions and information sharing.
- Embrace innovation and the use of technology.

### Our Actions

Based on our understanding of the current and future social care workforce in Leicester, and the challenges it faces, we have devised these key actions for the next twelve months.

- Improve the usage of updated data and intelligence as a shared resource to support the social care workforce
- Promote available resources to providers more effectively, and engage with providers who need the most support to use those resources
- Develop improved pathways into work

- Strengthen our partnership approach to learning and development
- Improve the positive recognition of social care as a valued career
- Increase the level of capability to use digital and technology innovations
- Support improved practice across the sector in recruitment and business continuity planning

## How did we develop our strategy?

This strategy has been developed in partnership and we will continue to work with all our social care provider partners in the city, people drawing upon support, and with colleagues from across the health and social care sector and beyond, including:

- Those receiving care and their families
- The workforce – paid and unpaid
- The provider community – regulated and non-regulated
- The council as commissioners of care and support
- Providers of accommodation and support
- The Integrated Care System as a driver of integrated care
- Leicester Employment Hub
- Inspired to Care
- Skills for Care
- The local care associations, EMCare and Home Care Alliance
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Commissioning Board
- LSCDG (Leicestershire Social Care Development Group)
- Organisations supporting those directly delivering social care

## What does our current workforce look like?

This strategy covers a wide range of roles in the external workforce, such as staff in care homes, home care and community-based care, including extra care, supported living and day opportunities for adults aged over 18. Our information comes largely from the Skills for Care data gathered through completion of the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set, completed by over 48% of Leicester's adult social care providers.

### Size and structure of the workforce

In 2022/23 the adult social care sector in England had an estimated 18,000 organisations with 39,000 care-providing locations and a workforce of around 1.79 million posts. The total number of posts in Leicester was around 15,000 in 2022/23. This was comprised of 14,000 filled posts and 1,000 vacancies. Since the previous year, the total number of posts has decreased by 1,200 (- 7%), the number of filled posts has decreased by 400 (-3%) and the number of vacancies has decreased by 750 (-42%).

There were an estimated 14,000 filled posts in adult social care, split between local authorities (6%), independent sector providers (81%), posts working for direct payment recipients (8%) and other sectors (6%). As of March 2023, Leicester had 268 CQC regulated services; of these, 98 were residential and 170 were non-residential services.

If the adult social care workforce grows proportionally to the number of people aged 65 and over in Leicester's population, then the number of posts needs to increase by 23% or an additional 3,220 posts. That would take the total number of posts to 17,220.

## Recruitment and Retention

Skills for Care estimates that the staff turnover rate in Leicester was 18.6%, which was lower than the region average of 29.7% and lower than England at 28.3%. Not all turnover results in workers leaving the sector, around half (51%) of starters were recruited from within the adult social care sector, therefore although employers need to recruit to these posts, the sector retains their skills and experience.

It is estimated that the vacancy rate in Leicester was 7.50%, which was below the regional average of 9.9% and England at 9.9%.

Across England, the vacancy rate has decreased compared to last year and the number of filled posts has increased. During this period international recruitment increased substantially which has impacted these trends. Workers in Leicester had on average 8.1 years of experience in the sector and 68% of the workforce had been working in the sector for at least three years.

CQC (the Care Quality Commission) report that care homes have found it very difficult to attract and retain registered nurses. They report nurses moving to jobs with better pay and conditions in the NHS. However, the ability to recruit overseas staff has alleviated this somewhat but nevertheless, a job in the NHS seems to remain a more attractive proposition for these staff than the adult social care sector.

## Employment Information

We estimate Leicester had 12,000 adult social care filled posts in the local authority and independent sectors. These included 950 managerial roles, 300 regulated professionals, 9,500 direct care (including 8,200 care workers), and 1,300 other-non-care proving roles.

The average number of sickness days taken in the last year in Leicester was 5.2, (7 in East Midlands and 5.9 across England). With an estimated directly employed workforce of 11,000, this means employers in Leicester lost approximately 58,000 days to sickness in 2022/23.

Under half (42%) of the workforce in Leicester were on zero-hours contracts. Around half (45%) of the workforce usually worked full-time hours and 55% were part-time.

## Workforce Demographics

The majority (79%) of the workforce in Leicester were female, and the average age was 42 years old. Workers aged under 25 made up 11% of the workforce and workers aged 55 and above represented 21%. Given this age profile approximately 2,500 posts will be reaching retirement age in the next 10 years.

Nationality varied by region, across England 81% of the workforce identified as British, while in the East Midlands region this was 82%. An estimated 68% of the workforce in Leicester identified as British, 9% identified as of an EU nationality and 24% a non-EU nationality, therefore there was a higher reliance on non-EU than EU workers.

A further breakdown of Leicester's workforce shows 39% of workers identify as White, 39% as Asian/Asian British, 19% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, 2% mixed/multiple ethnic groups and 1% other.

This compares with the latest general demographic profile of Leicester which is 43% Asian/Asian British, 40.9% White, 7.8% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, 4.1% other, 3.8% mixed/multiple ethnic groups.

### Pay Levels

Many roles in the social care sector have a relatively low level of pay.

In March 2023, the average workplace hourly pay for a care worker in Leicester's independent sector was £10.07 – that's 57 pence more than the national living wage at that time. A senior carer's average hourly pay was £10.51. Other support and outreach roles were paid on average £9.76 an hour. In Leicester we ensure that our fee rates support payment of at least the national minimum rate and include additional components such as a travel time allowance, uniform, 5 days of sick pay.

### Qualifications, Training and Skills

Skills for Care estimates show that 40% of the direct care providing workforce in Leicester hold a relevant adult social care qualification (43% in East Midlands and 46% in England).

Raw data from the ASC-WDS showed, of those workers without a relevant adult social care qualification recorded, 48% had five or more years of experience in the adult social care sector, 68% had engaged with the Care Certificate and 71% had completed training.

## What challenges are we facing?

### Leicester's local employment market

The local economy has faced unprecedented changes over the last few years: Covid19; the war in Ukraine; the cost-of-living crisis. All of these have had significant impact on the local employment and skills landscape. Providers report that inflationary pressures continue to be a major risk to their businesses.

According to the [Office of National Statistics](#), employment in Leicester has increased compared with the previous year. Leicester's employment rate for working age adults was lower at 66.7% than across the East Midlands as a whole in the year ending March 2023. Unemployment (people looking for work) has fallen since a year earlier. The most recent unemployment rate for Leicester was higher at 5.1% than across the East Midlands as a whole. The number of people who are claiming unemployment-related benefits is higher at 5.2% than the previous year, and people who are neither employed nor seeking work (called economic inactivity) has decreased since the last year to 28.5%.

Within the adult social care sector, these statistics are mirrored so more people are employed so the number of vacancies and staff turnover are lower than the previous year, however, recruitment and retention of skilled staff remains a problem, particularly amongst nursing qualified staff. People may choose to work in the hospitality or retail sectors as these are perceived to have less responsibility. Promoting careers in social care continues to be an ongoing challenge.

Skills for Care tell us that across England, variables that influence the likelihood of a worker leaving their role were:

- Workers who travelled further were more likely to leave.
- Those under 25, and over 60 years old, were more likely to leave their posts.

- Turnover decreased with higher levels of experience working in the sector.
- Likelihood of leaving decreased as pay levels increased.
- Likelihood of leaving decreased with higher levels of experience in role.
- Likelihood of leaving decreased if workers had more training.
- Turnover decreased if workers had a higher number of contracted hours.
- Likelihood of leaving decreased if workers had fewer sickness days.
- Workers on zero-hours contracts were more likely to leave their posts.
- Likelihood of high turnover rates increased if the establishment had high turnover historically.

## What has the workforce told us?

*This section to be completed.*

## What has worked elsewhere?

Information from other councils and skills bodies tells us that the following good practice actions can lead to improvements:

- Values based recruitment
- Improved coordination of recruitment, training, and support
- Engaging with schools and colleges for the workforce of the future
- Using 'Ambassadors' to change public perception of the care sector's image
- Improving training and support for people entering the care sector
- Sector wide working to address skills gaps
- Establishing a clear career structure
- Recognising and rewarding length of service and experience
- Improving remuneration, employment terms and conditions, staff benefits
- Targeting support towards small and medium sized organisations

## What are our key issues and risks?

### Strengths

- Large and growing part of the local economy
- Most of the workforce find care a rewarding career
- The perception of care work has improved since the Covid19 pandemic
- Ethnic profile of the workforce largely matches our local population
- Staff choose to stay in the sector when moving jobs

### Weaknesses

- Large number of zero hours contracts
- Lack of sustainable investment into social care
- Lack of awareness of pathways into social care as a career
- Key skills shortages, such as, nurses in social care

### Opportunities

- New ways of working including technology and digital opportunities
- Strengths based working and greater emphasis on frontline staff

- Good cross sector partnership approaches

## Threats

- Competition with other sectors of the economy
- The impact of the cost-of-living crisis
- The number of staff reaching retirement age is not matched by the number of new entrants to the sector
- Zero hours contracts do not suit a younger workforce

## What are we doing to shape the future of social care in Leicester?

Our vision is to make Leicester a great place to work and deliver high quality social care services, using strengths-based ways of working and embracing innovation and technology. We want a workforce that is sustainable, that is competent, and which feels valued. We want to attract a workforce across every stage of their career, including new starters. Strategically we are an active partner in the LLR Integrated Care System's People Board, and the work that this supports, including provision of training opportunities through the LLR Academy, and other initiatives to work as one system to support the workforce across health and care.

To do this we will:

- Work collaboratively with providers to support them to recruit, retain and develop their workforce.
- Work in partnership to carry out targeted local recruitment campaigns, promoting the sector in schools and with potential job applicants, building consistent and co-ordinated local skills offer, and promoting the benefits of working in social care.
- Work alongside others to make a case for fair and sustainable funding for the social care sector.
- Work alongside other organisations within our health and social care system to achieve a position of 'one workforce'.

We cannot address all the challenges facing our local workforce. Some require a consistent and sustainable long-term national funding approach. However, we will work together to do all that we can to make the difference to social care in Leicester.



## How will we know this is working?

### 1. Valued

Outcomes				Measures
1.1	A social care workforce that is, and feels, valued and rewarded	1.1a	The workforce feels valued by their employer	Improved percentage of the social care workforce who report that they feel valued by their employers and the public, and rewarded by their employers
		1.1b	The workforce feels valued by the public	
		1.1c	The workforce feels rewarded by their employer	

### 2. Sufficient

Outcomes				Measures
2.1	Workforce has the right capacity to manage predicted demand	2.1a	A workforce with the right types and numbers of roles to meet demand	Reduction in the number of vacancies
		2.1b	A workforce at full complement	Reduction in the level of turnover
		2.1c	A workforce where staff have skills to cover more than one role or to safely flex tasks within their existing role	Improvements in the timeliness of care packages being fulfilled.
		2.1d	A workforce willing and able to flex their working patterns to meet fluctuations in demand	
2.2	A social care workforce that is representative of the local population	2.2a	A workforce that is recruited locally	Closer match between the demography of Leicester and the demography within the social care workforce
		2.2b	A workforce that is representative of the diversity of the local population	
		2.2c	A workforce whose senior roles reflect the diversity of the local population	
2.3	Social care is a career aspiration across the whole life course	2.3a	More young people want to have care as a career aspiration	Closer match between the demography of Leicester and the demography within the social care workforce and in particular, the number of younger people in post.
		2.3b	Social care as a career is an opportunity, available for all ages of the population	

### 3. Confident and competent

Outcomes				Measures
3.1	A social care workforce that is competent,	3.1a	All social care roles have access to training and development opportunities	Improved percentage of the social care

	well trained and supported to be the best they can be	3.1b	All roles have access to career development and progression opportunities	workforce who report that they have sufficient training opportunities to support their career development
3.2	A social care workforce that operates in a strength-based and outcome-focussed way	3.2a	A workforce that uses strength-based practice to help those they support achieve their goals	Improved percentage of people who feel that their goals have been achieved
		3.2b	The right outcomes are achieved for those supported by the workforce	
3.3	A digitally/technologically skilled social care workforce	3.3a	A workforce that can use technology to do their job well	
		3.3b	A workforce able to support people to maintain their independence using technology	

## Our key actions to make a difference

The actions below show how we intend to work collaboratively to achieve our outcomes. Our focus will be on the first two years of the strategy, but some actions will be longer term and some actions may well be added during the life of the strategy.

Action	Detail	Outcomes	
1	Accelerate our exploration of technology to support care work and to address gaps in the workforce	Promote the adoption of digital working across the sector	3
		Increase the availability of local high-quality training for digital and technology skills	
		Promote the use of innovation and technology to support the realisation of outcomes	
2	Support improved practice across the sector in recruitment and business continuity planning	2.1 Continue our partnership with Inspired to Care who lead on the promotion of jobs and careers within the sector, including engagement with schools and colleges	1,2,3
		2.2 Connect with local, regional and national recruitment campaigns	
		2.3 Continue to support Values Based recruitment and practices that support inclusion, equality and diversity	
		2.4 Continue to work with the sector to reduce the number of zero hours contracts	
		2.5 Work with the sector to identify rewards and benefits schemes to recognise long service and good practice	

		2.6	Ensure that our fee rates are reviewed at least annually to reflect fair remuneration for providers and value for money for the council	
3	Improve the positive recognition of social care as a valued career, particularly amongst younger people	3.1	Across local and national networks, make the case for promoting social care as a valued career, and for a fair and sustainable funding approach for the sector	1,2,3
		3.2	Encourage the development of support networks and opportunities across all roles of social care	
		3.3	Connect with local, regional and national campaigns, including recruitment of Care Ambassadors, staff satisfaction surveys etc	
		3.4	Work alongside our NHS colleagues to develop a 'One Workforce' strategy	
4	Promote available resources to providers more effectively, and engage with providers who need the most support to use those resources	4.1	Continue to provide and promote coordinated training and staff development opportunities through the LSCDG (Leicestershire Social Care Development Group), Inspired to Care, the NHS, our provider forums and other providers as identified with local partners	1,2,3
		4.2	Promote the use of good practice toolkits and on-line resources	
		4.3	Support the further development of peer support and networking opportunities	
5	Improve the usage of updated data and intelligence as a shared resource to support the social care workforce	5.1	Measure progress against outcomes at least annually	1,2,3
		5.2	Review and agree priority areas at least annually	
		5.3	Update projections at least annually	